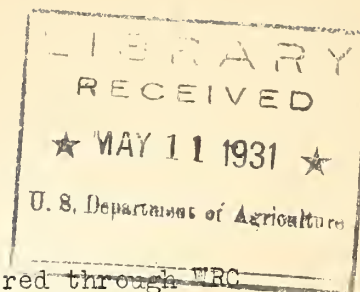


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WASHINGTON, THE FARM BOY



A radio talk by R. G. Foster, Extension Service, delivered through WRC and 48 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, May 2, 1931.

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Hello Everybody:

Do you realize that next week is Child Health Week? Every club member in the land should check up on his health this week just as an extra precaution, even though all of you are giving some thought to health as a part of your regular 4-H club work.

Now, even though you know about National Child Health Week, I know that some of you will be surprised to learn that on February 22, 1932, everyone in this Nation will celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of George Washington. But what has this to do with my subject - Washington, the farm boy? Just this: Between now and next February every 4-H club will want to plan a meeting for February is to center around the life of Washington, the farm boy. We of the 4-H clubs, should celebrate Washington's greatness not only as a pioneer, general, and our first President, but also as a farmer. Washington came of a long line of landowners. His early life was fraught with many of the same experiences familiar to the farm boys and girls of to-day. He was the fifth child of a well-to-do planter who might have afforded him any school advantage, but his father died when he was 12. This made it necessary for George to finish his schooling in a Virginia rural school. He learned something of books but more about the forests, manly sports, and the habits of Virginia life. He was a good woodsman, horseman, hunter, and skilled in sports at an early age. By the time he was as old as many 4-H club members his responsibilities were heavy. He began surveying for Lord Fairfax at 16 years of age, and was actually in command as a major and adjutant general in the Virginia State Militia at 20. Between 10 and 20 years, he became proficient in meeting the affairs and responsibilities of life. His outdoor life, his contact with real problems, his home responsibilities, his physical vigor and mental alertness were all developed before he was 21. At 15, he was tall and finely proportioned, firmly built and agile as a young athlete, and had the intrepidity of spirit and dignity of demeanor suitable to one of more advanced years. He preferred the bold life of the fields and the solitary quest of the hunter. His frankness, modesty, and unfailing good sense, together with his real appreciation of social proprieties, caused him to command the affection and confidence of his elders.

These are just a few of the important facts about Washington's life as a farm boy. Later, as a farmer, he was among the first to seek the adaptation of the latest scientific methods on his farm. He tried out many original experiments also. There is not time here to talk about all this, but for every club there is time

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to study the life of Washington during his boyhood and especially between 10 and 21 years of age. Learn how he lived and in so living developed his head to be mentally alert, his hands and body to be skillful, his physique to be healthy enough to withstand the strenuous life of the Revolution and the Presidency and how these experiences developed in him an appreciation of the finer things of life. How then did he develop his head, his heart, his hand, and his health?

Let me emphasize the fact that club work is work - not classroom work, but work with the forces of life out of which the individual boy or girl develops keenness, alertness, quick-wittedness, intelligence, resourcefulness, and aggressiveness in dealing with the problems of rural living. Do you not see in the life of Washington an embodiment of the 4-H motto, "To make the Best better?" He was continually seeking to find that which needed to be done, and to do them.

I see in the year ahead an army of nearly a million farm boys and girls, taking as their inspiration the boyhood life of the father of their country, studying the needs of their own communities, and busying themselves at the task of doing whatever needs to be done. Club work is measured largely by the extent to which it finds and solves the problems of everyday living, for farm boys and girls and their parents, at home, on the farm, and in community affairs.

December - February, 1932.

(Club members who desire information about Washington's boyhood and his activities as a farmer should read volume I of J. D. Sawyer's Washington, the first five chapters of The True George Washington, by Paul L. Ford, and George Washington, Country Gentleman, by Paul L. Hanworth.
